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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 81/NO. 10 MARCH 13, 2017

INSIDE

Lenin, Fidel and the role of the individual in history

— PAGE 8

‘Malcolm X, revolution in Cuba share same ideals’

BY OSBORNE HART

NEW YORK — “Malcolm X was one of the most notable political and revolutionary personalities of the 20th century,” Alejandro Castillo, speaking on behalf of Anayansi Rodriguez, Cuba’s ambassador to the United Nations, told a crowd of over 200 people Feb. 21 at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem. The meeting marked 52 years since the revolutionary Black leader was assassinated in the Audubon Ballroom.

“The way he developed his political thinking, particularly during the last years of his life,” Castillo said, “led him to understand that the popular revolution that succeeded in the small neighboring island of Cuba in 1959 also represented the ideals he was fighting for.”

Others who spoke included professor and activist Johanna Fernández, who moderated the meeting; William Sales, author of *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American*

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Protests hit cop attack on youth in California

BY BERNIE SENTER

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Three hundred people took to the streets here Feb. 22 after a confrontation the day before between 13-year-old Christian Dorscht and off-duty Los Angeles cop Kevin Ferguson. Videos taken on the scene and widely circulated online show Ferguson grab Dorscht by the neck, drag him across lawns and over a hedge, and, when confronted by other young people, take out his gun and fire a shot.

Young people have continued to demonstrate since, demanding the cop be prosecuted. Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Los Angeles, and other SWP members have built and joined the actions.

“Let go of me, I’m only like 13,” Dorscht says as he is dragged. Other youth on the scene say the adult never identified himself as a cop. After some schoolmates try to get him away, the cop pulls a concealed gun from his waistband and fires a shot into the ground. Dorscht and a 15-year-old

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Amnesty Now! Stop raids, deportations!

Detroit News via AP/Todd McInturf

Feb. 16 “Day Without Immigrants” march in Detroit. More workers than ever oppose deportations, see rulers’ efforts to criminalize immigrants are aimed at dividing working class.

Socialist Workers Party says fight for amnesty

BY JOHN STUDER

NEW YORK — “The Socialist Workers Party demands amnesty for workers without papers and an end to government raids and deportations,” said Osborne Hart, the party’s candidate for mayor of New York, as he joined working-class protests across the city and at a Feb. 25 meeting publicly launching his campaign.

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Trump attack on immigrant workers faces obstacles

BY SETH GALINSKY

President Donald Trump’s executive orders calling for increased deportations of immigrant workers are bumping into major roadblocks. This includes protests led by immigrant workers across the country, opposition from workers debating the moves, as well as from the Mexican government and U.S. military and

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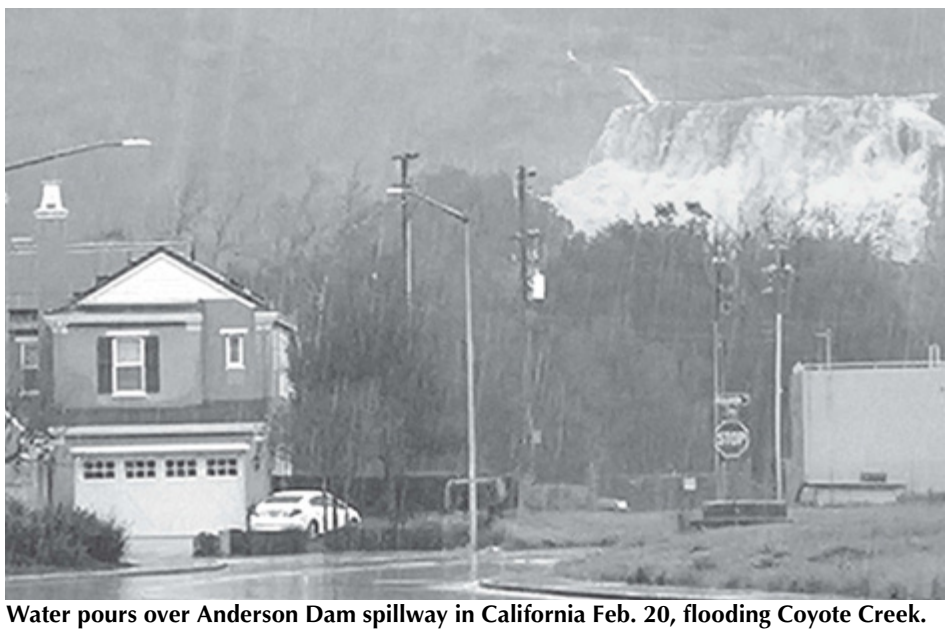
Devastation by floods in Calif. caused by capitalism, not rain



Water pours over Anderson Dam spillway in California Feb. 20, flooding Coyote Creek.

BY BETSEY STONE AND NORTON SANDLER

SAN JOSE, Calif. — “We should have been notified. We should have been evacuated sooner. It would have prevented a lot of damage,” Carmen Grota told members of the Socialist Workers Party visiting the working-class area of San Jose that flooded Feb. 20 when the Coyote Creek poured over its banks.

Up and down the streets in this largely Latino and Asian neighborhood were piles of destroyed furniture, toys and other ruined belongings.

What the politicians and bourgeois press insist — as they wring their hands at their supposed powerlessness — is that the social tragedy caused by the massive rainfall and flooding in California is the unfortunate but unavoidable result of natural causes. But the disaster for working people here is a product of sharp inequalities that

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SWP exemption fight defends political rights of working class

BY NAOMI CRAINE

A draft opinion by the Federal Elections Commission denying the Socialist Workers Party exemption from disclosing the names of its campaign contributors “has lost sight of the governing First Amendment principle: that ‘[t]he Constitution protects against the compelled disclosure of political associations and beliefs,’” the SWP’s attorneys wrote Feb. 16. That’s what the Supreme Court said in 1974, when the SWP first won exemption from the disclosure laws. The proposed decision “rests upon an

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Greek workers in gunsight of IMF, EU rulers as crisis deepens

BY JIM BRADLEY

“In the name of tough fiscal targets, people who might otherwise survive are dying,” Michalis Giannakos, leader of the Panhellenic Federation of Public Hospital Employees union, told the *Guardian* Jan. 1. “Our hospitals have become danger zones.”

Working people in Greece face ris-

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Georgia: City workers rally, gain support for union recognition

Nurses in Silver Spring, Md., fight for adequate staffing, union

Solidarity marks response to attacks on temples, mosques

BY JIM BRADLEY

During the night of Feb. 25 up to 100 headstones at the predominantly Jewish Mount Carmel Cemetery in Philadelphia were vandalized in an act of Jew-hatred, part of a step up in anti-Semitic acts in the United States, Canada and elsewhere in the past few months. At the same time, there is an increase in threats and attacks on mosques and Muslims.

On Feb. 27 dozens of volunteers showed up that morning in work gear ready to repair the damage. Among them were about two dozen young people from the local Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Two members of the Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Union, whose members include stonemasons, joined in.

"This was the most cowardly act you could imagine," said union President Dennis Pagliotti.

A week earlier vandals overturned and damaged about 200 headstones at a Jewish cemetery in St. Louis.

"It's hard to express how terrible it was. It was horrible," Anita Feigenbaum, executive director of the Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery, told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Feigenbaum reported that there was a "tremendous outpouring of support" from people who wanted to donate money and others volunteering to help clean up.

On Feb. 20 bomb threats were called into Jewish community centers in 11 cities. A similar round of threats was received in January. All told, there have been 90 anti-Semitic attacks or bomb threats at 73 Jewish community centers in 30 states and one Canadian province since the beginning of the year, reported the *Wall Street Journal*.

"This is a horrific and disgusting act of vandalism which cannot be tolerated," Imam Mufti Asif Umar of the Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis, said in a statement released to the media. "We stand with our Jewish friends."

The Council on American-Islamic Relations, a prominent Muslim civil-rights organization, has offered a $5,000 reward for information leading to conviction of those responsible for issuing the bomb threats. As of Feb. 28 a Muslim-organized LaunchGood campaign with over 4,600 backers had raised $138,000 to help repair the damaged Jewish cemeteries in St. Louis and Philadelphia.

In suburban Tampa, Florida, mosque officials were called out after 2 a.m. Feb. 24 when authorities told them the Islamic Society's Daarus Salaam Mosque had been hit with an arson attack.

"Whoever did this maybe intended to discourage us," said mosque spokesperson Mazen Bondogji at a press conference later that morning. "But this makes us stronger than before, than ever, because of the huge amount of support and solidarity we are receiving."

"This is no different than the wave of anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish community centers," said Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn at a press conference condemning the attack on the mosque.

Jewish residents in a Toronto apartment building discovered that their doors were vandalized with Nazi symbols and that their Mezuzahs (small ritual scrolls affixed to doorposts) were damaged or removed Feb. 20. "Like all acts of hatred and intolerance, these deliberate acts of hostility toward the Jewish community are completely unacceptable," said Adam Minsky, president and CEO of the United Jewish Appeal Federation of Greater Toronto.

On Feb. 8, an outfit called the Canadian National Independence party distributed flyers at the University of Western Ontario in the city of London accusing "Jewish terrorists" of shooting and killing six Muslim worshippers at a Quebec City mosque at the end of January and calling for "all Zionists in Canada to be tried as terrorists and all members put in jail."

In response to the anti-Semitic leaflet the university student council issued a strong statement of solidarity with the Jewish students.

Early in the morning on Feb. 21 arsonists set fire to the Islamic Cultural Association of Kungalv and the mosque in Goteborg, Sweden, causing major damage. A month before, in response to a series of arson attacks against mosques, more than 1,000 demonstrators marched by the parliament building in Stockholm in solidarity with Muslims.

George Chalmers in Philadelphia contributed to this article.

France: Rallies condemn cop rape assault

Christophe Saidi/Sipa via AP Images

Hundreds of high school students in Paris walked out and blocked entrances to over a dozen schools Feb. 23, part of continuing protests against police abuse of 22-year-old Theo L. who was raped with a police baton three weeks earlier. The students marched to the Place de la Nation in eastern Paris to rally, above. Police helicopters hovered overhead, dropping tear gas on the protesters.

Theo, a Black man whose full name has not been publicly released, was first ordered to show his ID and then assaulted by cops in the Parisian suburb of Aulnay-sous-Bois. The incident, part of which was caught on CCTV, has sparked protests in suburbs across France. The police inflicted such severe wounds to Theo's rectum that he required major emergency surgery. With injuries also to his head, he remains in a hospital and was declared incapacitated for 60 days.

The attack shined a spotlight on the abysmal living and working conditions confronting workers in these suburban towns, including many immigrants of African origin. Official unemployment rates are 27 percent compared to 10 percent for the rest of the country.

An internal police review said Theo's wounds, including a 2.5-inch tear in his anus, was "accidental." But under pressure from the public outcry, one officer has been charged with rape and three others with aggravated assault.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

Back workers' struggles against boss attacks

Amid slow-burning depression conditions today the bosses seek to solve their profit crisis off workers' backs, with job cuts and attacks on health care, pensions and union rights. The 'Militant' covers workers struggles from picket lines to protest actions

Militant/Bernie Senter

CWA unionists protest Feb. 11 in Los Angeles at AT&T store for new contract.

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Fax: (212) 244-4947
E-mail: themilitant@mac.com
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Attack on immigrants faces obstacles

Continued from front page

police officials.

The deportation of fellow workers is less popular than ever among workers in the United States — including among those who voted for Trump — who face the carnage from the worldwide capitalist economic crisis. Many know that the target of the raids and deportations is not just workers without papers — the measures are aimed at dividing the working class and pushing down all our wages and living conditions to benefit the propertied rulers.

New Department of Homeland Security guidelines open the door to broader raids and deportations. But Trump continues to say the focus will be on workers without papers who have been found guilty of crimes.

"We are removing gang members, drug dealers and criminals," Trump said in his Feb. 28 speech to Congress. "Bad ones are going out as I speak tonight and as I have promised."

Before the session, Trump floated a trial balloon about a bipartisan plan for a "pathway" to legal status for undocumented workers without criminal backgrounds.

It's still to be seen what exact course the administration will end up pursuing. That is being fought out.

The DHS guidelines say that immigrants who illegally enter the U.S. — no matter what country they are from — will be returned to "the territory of the foreign contiguous country from which they arrive" — in other words Mexico — while they await court hearings.

But the Mexican government says they'll refuse to take them. "We told them that was impossible," Mexico Interior Secretary Miguel Angel Osorio Chong, told the press Feb. 24.

While Trump prides himself on being a tough negotiator, the Mexican government has strong cards in its deck as well.

New York Times columnist Eduardo Porter noted Feb. 22 the apprehensions of Mexican immigrants at the border are the lowest in 40 years. Because of high unemployment in the U.S. and tighter policing of the border, fewer Mexicans are coming to the U.S. than are returning to Mexico.

Last year the Mexican government deported more than 143,000 Guatemalans, Hondurans and Salvadorans who attempted to pass through Mexico to the U.S. In effect the "wall, as it were — is Mexico," Porter said.

If the capitalist government in Mexico stopped deporting Central Americans, it could double or triple the numbers reaching the U.S.

Tens of thousands have marched across Mexico protesting the Trump administration's threat to dump immigrants it deports into Mexico, regardless of where they come from. One banner in Mexico City read, "Gracias, Trump, for unifying Mexico."

The White House has also floated the possibility of sharply increasing tariffs on goods imported from Mexico. Some 80 percent of Mexican exports — $21 billion — go to the U.S.

But that's not a one-way street either. U.S. agribusiness exports $17.7 billion a year to Mexico, their third largest customer, in products ranging from corn and wheat to corn syrup. Small farmers and agribusiness alike are worried that an increase in tensions between the two governments could hit them hard.

Little enthusiasm from military, cops

There is little support among the military brass for turning the armed forces into auxiliary immigration agents.

Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly went to Mexico City Feb. 23 with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for discussions with Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto. "There will be no — repeat no — use of military force in immigration operations," he said.

The retired Marine Corps general also said "there will be no — repeat, no — mass deportations."

Instead, Kelly said, immigration agents would focus on "criminals," essentially the policy during the presidency of Barack Obama.

Many police chiefs have spoken out against their officers acting as immigration cops, fearing it would destroy immigrants willingness to talk to them. "I would rather have my officers focused on going after violent criminals and people breaking into homes than going after nannies and cooks," Houston Chief Art Acevedo told the press.

Over 350 people jammed the city council chambers at a town meeting Jan. 10 in Kingston, a town in rural New York, to debate whether cops there should ask people about their immigration status. Police Chief Egidio Tinti said they had a longstanding unwritten policy against asking people about their papers. The debate lasted three hours with dozens of speakers, speaking 3 to 1 in favor of making Kingston a sanctuary city. The council approved the policy 5-3.

In his speech to Congress, Trump raised imposing new restrictions on legal immigration, as well as targeting workers without papers. He called for "switching away from this current system of lower-skilled immigration, and instead adopting a merit-based system."

Trump isn't the only one to call for shifting immigration rules to favor admitting more "smart" people — tech whizzes, entrepreneurs and meritocrats, but he's among the most brazen. Cutting working-class immigration, Trump says, will "raise workers' wages and help struggling families — including immigrant families."

But growing numbers of workers refuse to buy into pitting workers against each other no matter where they were born.

Militant/Ellen Brickley

Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for N.Y. mayor, at Feb. 23 rally against deportations in Elizabeth, N.J.

Jim George, 68, who lives in Perry, Iowa, home to a Tyson Foods meatpacking plant, told the *Washington Post* Feb. 26 that though he voted for Trump, he doesn't agree with deportations. "These are good folks," he said. "This place would not be functioning without the folks that have come in here."

The *Post* ran interviews with a number of workers in rural and small-town Iowa who said the same thing.

SWP says, Fight for amnesty

Continued from front page

"Above all, working people need to overcome the efforts of the bosses and their government to divide immigrant and native-born and get us to fight among ourselves," Hart said.

"The road forward is to unify the working class, to chart a course to take political power out of the hands of the propertied rulers," he explained.

"And we demand an end to all immigration 'tests' that seek to bar people from entering the country because of their religion, nationality or political views," Hart said. "Leaders of my party have faced the threat of deportation because of their political activity, and we've fought and won the right of every one of them to continue to do politics in the U.S."

Hart joined protests against deportation raids in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and in Massapequa Park, Long Island, and an action in support of the Teamsters union organizing drive at Sims Recycling Center in Brooklyn.

Hart joined other party members in taking the SWP's working-class campaign to workers' doorsteps and workplaces. He campaigned at the Hunts Point produce market and meatpacking facility in the Bronx Feb. 23 from 3 to 6 a.m., where many of the 8,000 workers had joined the "Day Without Immigrants" a week earlier.

More than 50 workers gathered that morning, holding placards reading, "I am not a criminal," and urging fellow workers to take off work.

"What you did was similar to what happened in 2006, when hundreds of thousands of workers took off work on May Day, protesting government attacks and raids against workers without papers," Hart said. "We need to keep organizing, talking with other workers and building solidarity."

Thirty-seven of the workers got copies of the *Militant*. And a number asked to set up a meeting to discuss what to do next with party members.

The protest in Elizabeth was held at the privately-run federal detention center there, where immigrant workers in the area picked up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents are taken. "The government wants to give freer range to the bosses who run and profit from these centers," Hart told participants. "We're against all the government's prisons. Stop the raids and deportations!"

"What is happening is not peculiar to the current president. Trump is not out to deport millions of immigrants," Hart told those at the campaign-launch meeting. "He is acting on what capital needs — cheap labor to weaken and divide the working class and maximize their wealth.

"They pit workers against each other, using the tactic of divide and rule," he said. "This fight is vital to building the union movement. And that's central to being able to defeat growing attacks by the bosses

"But far from being terrorized, workers — immigrant and non-immigrant — are responding in the streets," Hart said. "And we find that as we knock on workers doors across the city and beyond, they want to discuss what's happening. And they are attracted to a party that looks at all politics from a class point of view.

"There are two classes and three parties, we explain," he said. "The boss class has their Democrats and Republicans, and the workers have the Socialist Workers Party."

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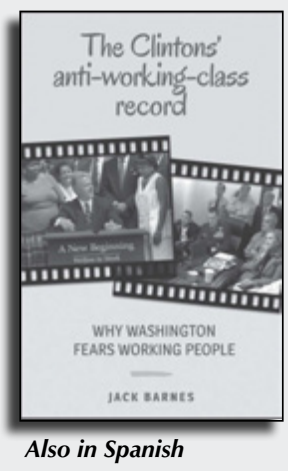

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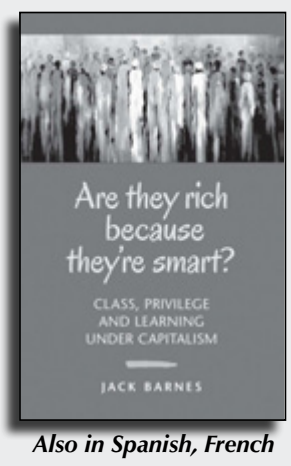

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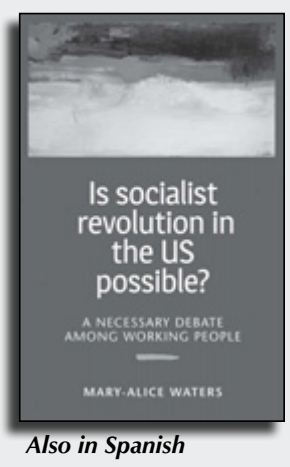

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Protests hit Calif. cop attack

Continued from front page

youth who had tried to free him were arrested and charged with assault and battery. A dozen other young people were taken to the cop station and grilled. No charges were filed against the cop.

In an interview on KTLA-TV after he was released, Dorscht said the incident began when the cop cursed at a girl he accused of stepping on his lawn. "I said, 'Hey, that's not how you treat a lady.' And then he came at me," Dorscht said. "He hit me. I ran to the street to run away from him, and he got me."

"This cop is just irate, starts charging after this poor kid," a neighbor who witnessed the incident said, backing up the boy's account.

The cop accuses the teenager of threatening to shoot him. "I didn't say that. Why are you lying?" Dorscht is shown in the video saying. "I said I'm going to *sue* you."

Outrage at what the video shows, and that the cop is walking free, sparked hundreds to march around the area the next night. "It could have been me, my friend or someone from my family," said Jocelyne Gutierrez, 21. Twenty-three people were arrested. Isolated incidents of violence and vandalism occurred.

"My son Joel Acevedo was killed by the Anaheim police department July 22, 2012. He was 21 years old," home health care worker Donna Acevedo told Richter at a protest Feb. 24. "My son was running away. He was beaten, handcuffed and shot in the back of the head. I'm not going to let anyone forget."

"It's very important that we continue to fight police brutality. The role of the cops — whether in Anaheim or Los Angeles — is to protect the private property of the capitalist rulers and to intimidate people, to get us to feel like there is nothing we can do about the conditions we are forced to live in," Richter said. "Any questioning of how we are being treated is seen by the cops as resistance to be met with force on their part."

At another demonstration of 100 in front of the Anaheim Police Station Feb. 26, Richter joined in a lively discussion and debate over an open mike.

"The police were not created to 'serve and protect.' The police were created to intimidate immigrants. The police were created to protect property and to be used against people of color," Irvine high school student August Carleton said. "We need to tell the police to represent people of color."

"The cops have to be held accountable. They aren't above the law," said Theresa Smith, whose son Caesar Cruz was killed by the Anaheim police in 2009. "What that officer did to those youth is come out with a loaded gun."

"There's no difference between a Mexican cop and a white cop. They work for the same white supremacist system," said Naui Huitchilopochtli, a university utility worker.

A couple of speakers said we should drive the cop involved in the shooting out of the neighborhood.

"The system is built to oppress people of color. If you are white you have less chance of being killed. Sure some get killed but more as an outlier," said Stephanie Lindo, a Black student attending Biola University.

What is role of the cops?

"I'm white. It's not only Black and brown people killed by cops. These guys are killers and killers kill," said Sara Hertl, whose brother Justin was killed by the Anaheim cops in 2003 in front of their grandmother. "My brother was 23 years old. He wasn't a gang member. It's not about race."

"We demand the cop who manhandled the teenagers and shot his gun be arrested, charged and prosecuted to the full extent of the law," Richter said. "We live under the system of capitalism. Blacks and Latinos are disproportionately killed by cops and fill the prisons in a larger percentage than Caucasians."

"Do you know how many killings Los Angeles County cops have been charged with since 2000?" he asked. Some in the crowd shouted back, "Zero?"

"That's right, zero," Richter said.

"But there is another side of this," he said. "There is no such thing as 'white people.' Tens of millions of working people who face economic carnage all across the country — no jobs, dangerous jobs, low pay, no health care, drugs and suicide. The majority are Caucasian.

"While a higher percentage of Blacks and Latinos are killed by cops than Caucasians, more Caucasians are killed by cops," he said. "We live in a class-divided society. Workers have common interests no matter what our nationality and have a common enemy, the system that keeps in power the millionaires and billionaires of all hues who benefit from the cops' protection and run this country.

"My party — the Socialist Workers Party — says working people need to build a working-class movement of the majority to take political power out of their hands," Richter said, "like Fidel Castro and the people of Cuba did. They control their own destiny today."

Puerto Rico: Students protest gov't cuts, tuition rise

Thousands of students and campus workers marched in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Feb. 23 to protest government plans to cut the University of Puerto Rico budget by nearly one-third and impose steep hikes in tuition. Ricardo Rosselló, governor of the U.S. colony, instructed the university administration to come up with a plan for the cuts, in response to instructions from Washington's Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico.

The board, appointed by then-President Barack Obama, has the power to dictate cuts in Puerto Rico's budget and to override any decision of the Puerto Rican government in order to ensure payment of some $70 billion of debt to bondholders and hedge funds.

The board also ordered a 10 percent cut in public pensions.

"Thousands of people have already left our country for the United States, mostly youth, because of the bitter measures the government has imposed that have done nothing to solve the economic crisis," Karla Sanabria, a student at the university's Río Piedras campus, told the *Militant* by phone Feb. 24. "They're making cuts in medical care, in payments to pensions funds, workers' Christmas bonuses. Capital, colonialism is looting the country."

Fiscal Board Executive Director Ramón Ruiz threatened that if the colonial government of the island doesn't make deep enough cuts, the board will impose its own plan. Business Insider website reported Ruiz told them the board is not responsible for the consequences.

—SETH GALINSKY

Greek workers face social crisis

Continued from front page

ing mortality rates, an increase in life-threatening infections and a growing shortage of medical equipment. Today 2.5 million Greeks have no health care coverage, out of a total population of 11 million. These are just a few of the most dramatic reflections of the devastating impact on working people of the yearslong so-called Greek "debt crisis" beginning in 2010.

The insolvency of the Greek government — deepened by unequal trade relations in Europe and relentless pressure for payment on Greek bonds in the hands of banks and private investors worldwide — has worsened years of economic recession. This crisis is exacerbated by the economic impact of the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing Syria, landing in Greece and increasingly refused entry elsewhere in Europe. All of this portends more carnage for workers and farmers.

The possibility of the withdrawal of Greece from the European Union, a so-called Grexit, is once again on the table. Under the political and economic pressure of the slow-burning world capitalist depression, this would deepen already sharpening conflicts in the EU, threatening the breakup of the 28-nation capitalist trade block which was cobbled together in 1993 with Berlin at the helm.

In 2015 the EU, joined by the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund, imposed a series of deepening cuts on government social programs and union rights in return for a "bailout package" of international loans.

Though they had been elected earlier that year on an "anti-austerity" platform, the Syriza party — the Coalition of the Radical Left — and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras agreed to virtually every one of the demands of U.S. and European finance capital.

Some of the measures took effect this January. In response, farmers have been blocking highways at a number of Greece's northern border crossings. On Feb. 14, 2,000 farmers descended on Athens, demanding relief from rising taxes and attacks on their pensions. "Ordinary people support our blockades," protest leader Vangelis Boutas said.

The $97 billion "bailout" loan Athens accepted in 2015 included a $2 billion cut in the country's pension system.

The loan arrangement, the third since 2010, ends in 2018. Payments to

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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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100 Years Since the Bolshevik Revolution — Lessons for Today's World. Speaker: Dag Tirsén, Communist League. Fri., March 10, 7 p.m. Donation: £2.50. *Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St. M1 2EH.*

—CALENDAR—

ILLINOIS

Chicago

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For information about how to apply contact: Chicago Cuba Coalition call (312) 952-2618 or email: ICanGoToCuba@gmail.com.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Maggie Trowe, Editor

Georgia: City workers rally, win support for union recognition

COLLEGE PARK, Ga. — "We want to feel appreciated. It's time for a change," Quakita Lane, who works in the water and sewers department, told some 100 workers and others at a Feb. 23 rally in support of the fight by city workers to win recognition of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees here. About a dozen of her co-workers also attended.

"I started as a temp in 2008 and only got full-time two years ago," Frederick Davis, a building and grounds landscaper, told the *Militant*. "They claimed there was never enough money in the budget."

More than 75 percent of the workers have signed cards for the union, AFSCME Local 1644 President Tracey Thornhill said in a statement. He said workers had faced "years of workplace indignations, favoritism and unsafe working conditions."

School bus drivers, postal workers, transport workers and others, including Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Atlanta, came to lend their support.

William Bradley and four of his coworkers from the Bon Apetit food service at Emory University came to the rally. They have also been working to organize a union. "We want people to feel the solidarity," he told the *Militant*.

— *Janice Lynn*

Nurses in Silver Spring, Md., fight for adequate staffing, union

SILVER SPRING, Md. — More than 120 nurses and supporters rallied in front of the Holy Cross Hospital here Feb. 13 to support a drive to be represented by the National Nurses United union. Among those attending in solidarity were members of the International Association of Machinists, the Laborers International Union, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

Two of the central issues are patient safety and adequate staffing, nurses involved in the organizing effort say.

"Over the last few months, HCH management has been diverting patient-care dollars to pay anti-union consultants who are interfering with patient care, and harassing and intimidating our coworkers," said a flyer published by National Nurses United on the day of the rally. "RNs [Registered Nurses] sent a clear message to Holy Cross Hospital management: We will not back down until our patients are safe."

— *Tom Headley*

Militant/Janice Lynn

City workers rally in College Park, Georgia, Feb. 23 to win American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, advance fight against "years of workplace indignations."

SWP exemption fight defends workers' political rights

Continued from front page

unprecedented, dangerous standard."

If approved, the order would end the SWP's exemption from reporting the names of contributors who give more than $200 to the party's election campaigns, as well as the names of the campaign's vendors.

The FEC was scheduled to consider the draft, signed by commission chair Steven Walther, at its Feb. 23 meeting, but they put the meeting off. The commission is riddled with dissension.

Commissioner Ann Ravel, a Democrat, issued a blistering criticism of the agency entitled *Dysfunction and Deadlock* and sent her letter of resignation to President Donald Trump Feb. 19.

The meeting on the SWP exemption is tentatively scheduled for March 13.

"Winning this exemption, and maintaining it for more than 40 years, has been an important victory in defending workers' right to engage in political activity independent of the bosses and their parties," John Studer, the Socialist Workers Party's national campaign director, told the *Militant* Feb. 18. "All workers have a stake in the fight to defend the exemption."

At the same time, "The SWP never has and never will let the government determine what we do politically. Socialist Workers Party candidates are running for office across the country and will continue to do so, within the law and in a way that maximizes protection of our contributors," Studer said, regardless what the FEC decides.

SWP challenges false standards

One of the claims in the draft is that the SWP "may be encouraged by major-party interests in order to divert votes from other major-party contenders."

"There is not a *scintilla* of evidence of any vote diversion, nor has there ever been in the more than 75 years of the SWP's participation in elections," SWP attorneys Michael Krinsky and Lindsey Frank, from the prominent firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky and Lieberman, answer. "In fact, such diversion is entirely contrary to the reason the SWP runs election campaigns, which is to advocate its own, entirely distinct and independent political positions."

The FEC's draft asserts "the public interest in disclosure of SWP's financing is significantly greater" than in the past because the SWP "received more than 12,000 votes, which ranked 11th out of the 31 presidential candidates."

The party has received similar or higher vote totals in past election cycles, the SWP says, "in which the Supreme Court and the Commission found, without qualification, that the SWP was a minor party that warranted exemption."

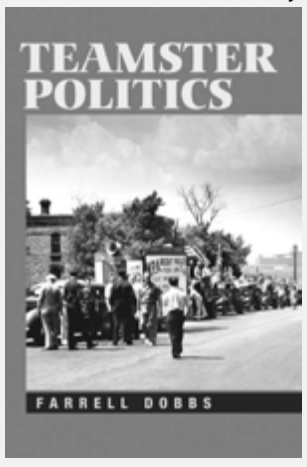
Similarly, the draft claims that the $82,000 raised by the Socialist Workers Party campaign in 2016 — compared to the *billions* spent by the capitalist candidates — is a reason to require disclosure of contributors' names. This "blinks at reality," said Krinsky and Frank, and the opinion "should be rejected on this basis alone."

Another incredible assertion in the draft is that the SWP's exemption should end because Sen. Bernie Sanders is known as a socialist, has "a party identification materially similar to" that of the SWP, and got a lot of votes in the Democratic primary.

The Socialist Workers Party's views are "obviously distinct," Krinsky and Frank write. "They include: The SWP's openly calling for the establishment of a workers and farmers government that will 'overturn the dictatorship of capital,' abolish capitalism in the United States and join in the worldwide struggle for socialism; and the SWP's presentation of Cuba's socialist revolution as an example for

Continued on page 11

Recommended reading



"Unionism and politics cannot be separated. Power generated at the trade-union level can be shattered by government blows. Workers must enter the political arena as an independent class force, with their own party."

— *Farrell Dobbs*

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25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

March 13, 1992

Despite a federal court injunction, longshore workers shut down virtually all West Coast shipping February 17. Ships sat idle in ports from California to Alaska as 4,000 members of the International Longhsoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) rallied and demonstrated in support of 351 brothers and sisters fired by the Southern Pacific railroad from the Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF) that serves the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

The firings are widely seen as a sharp attack on what many workers consider the strongest union on the West Coast.

On December 16 Southern Pacific gave a 60-day cancellation notice to Pacific Rail Services, which managed the ICTF. This meant that ILWU Local 13, Allied Division, would be terminated in the facility. The ICTF yard employees voted for ILWU representation in 1987.

March 13, 1967

In an act of naked racism, congress has denied Adam Clayton Powell his seat. The way was opened for this display of anti-Negro sentiment by the report of the committee set up to make a "recommendation" on Powell, headed by liberal Emanuel Cellers of New York. The Cellers committee, which included Negro Democrat John Conyers, found Powell "guilty," and recommended he be seated with punishments, including fines. This wasn't enough blood to suit the congressional lynchers, however, and they increased the sentence to expulsion.

Their action exposes the deep racism of both the Democratic and Republican parties, and of all wings of those parties, including the Northern liberals.

The Democrats and the Republicans represent the ruling circles who benefit from racism and who are determined to preserve the racist system.

March 14, 1942

American workers will get their first taste of government rationing when sugar rationing goes into effect within the next few weeks. This is the beginning of a policy that will certainly be extended to other necessities as the war goes on.

Ostensibly, this rationing will be undertaken to insure an equitable distribution of scarce commodities and to prevent price extortion. The lesson of Britain shows, however, that rationing under government and capitalist control limits the amount of goods that the masses may secure, but does not prevent those with large incomes from obtaining all they want of both necessities and luxuries.

One of the chief reasons that rationed commodities prove insufficient is that a great amount of them are sluiced off into the Black Market, where they are easily obtainable — at greatly inflated prices.

Flood exposes social crisis

Continued from front page

are a result of the class relations imposed by capitalism.

In much of the capitalist world, workers only find housing they can begin to afford in low-lying areas given to flooding. This neighborhood is densely packed with families with larger households, nearly twice as many per square mile than the rest of the city, 38 percent of whom were born abroad.

A big pile of ruined belongings stood outside the De Alba's home. "We had no warning," Mindy De Alba, who works as a customer service representative, told us. "My mom called me at work saying the house was flooded."

"You have things like those 'Amber Alerts,'" her mother Maria said. "Why couldn't they at least have put out something like that?"

De Alba said the family had to be rescued by one of the boat crews that moved from house to house, pulling families and pets out of the filthy water. "My hats off to the rescuers," she said. "They did a great job."

Hundreds of homes, apartments and trailer homes were inundated, some to the rooftops. Most people we talked to, like the De Alba family, first heard about the flood not from city officials but from friends, relatives or co-workers. Many became aware of it only when they saw advancing water. Several told us that their flood insurance covered only the structure of their homes, but nothing inside.

Homeless people who camped along the creek were among the first to confront the rising waters. Some had to be rescued from trees they climbed to escape.

Hours after the floodwaters inundated the area, the government issued a mandatory evacuation order for 14,000 residents.

After a long drought California has been hit by a series of strong rainstorms. Already deteriorating infrastructure at dams and other structures is cracking under the strain. In February, the emergency spillway at California's highest dam, in Oroville, began to break apart, leading to the belated evacuation of 188,000 people. At least four people have died in the storms.

The flooding in San Jose came after the reservoir at the nearby Anderson dam overflowed, sending water rushing down into Coyote Creek. The reservoir is limited to 68 percent of capacity because of its proximity to an earthquake-prone fault line the state failed to notice when the dam was built.

After inspectors belatedly discovered the dam was vulnerable to a major quake, capacity was restricted and construction was begun to strengthen the dam — but it won't be finished until 2024.

In the face of inaction by city officials, it was left to residents and their neighbors, friends and relatives to help each other. Carman Grota's husband, a lineman for a tech company, worked with neighbors to unclog the drain down the street.

Four days after the flood, Gabriel Bravo, a maintenance worker with the school district, was still pumping water from his basement onto the sidewalk. He told us the house, bought by the family in 1982, has been condemned, with the foundation too damaged to salvage.

"The water district went and measured the creek for three straight days and nobody said anything to us," he said. "Then *boom* the water came."

Bravo, along with four other workers we spoke to, subscribed to the *Militant* newspaper. Interest in the paper increased when we showed them an article explaining how the revolutionary government and the people in Cuba were organized to prevent the loss of life during Hurricane Mathew in 2016. When the hurricane hit Haiti and the U.S., people were left to fend for themselves. Over 1,000 were killed in Haiti and at least 23 in the U.S.

The same Category 4 hurricane ravaged Cuba, but there was not a single fatality. The government and people mobilized to evacuate everyone, and their pets, from harm's way, and organized to rebuild homes and infrastructure afterwards.

The difference between Cuba and the United States is the revolution workers and farmers made there in 1959, we explained, and overturned the capitalist social relations we suffer under here.

In the wake of the outcry over the lack of notice and support from the city, San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo was forced to admit something had gone terribly wrong.

"If the first time a resident is aware that they need to get out of a home is when they see a firefighter in a boat," Liccardo told a Feb. 22 press conference, "something went wrong."

Founder of sanctuary group fights her own deportation

Militant/Alyson Kennedy

DENVER — "We are going to keep organizing — Jeanette belongs here with us," America Carbajal told more than 100 people who rallied at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement regional office here Feb. 15 to support the fight of Jeanette Vizguerra to remain in the U.S.

That morning, government officials denied Vizguerra's application to renew a stay of deportation, saying she is a "priority" for removal because of two misdemeanor convictions — one for carrying a document with a false Social Security number, the other for re-entering the United States in 2013 after going to Mexico for her mother's funeral. She went into sanctuary at the First Unitarian Church instead of reporting to the ICE office, where she would likely have faced arrest.

Vizguerra is a well-known labor activist and founder of the Metro Denver Sanctuary Coalition. She has lived here for 20 years and has three school-age children.

"This is not the end but another step in a long journey," Vizguerra told the rally by phone. "When I started the sanctuary coalition, I never thought I would need it."

Ingrid Encalada Latorre has been in sanctuary at Mountain View Friends Meeting church since Nov. 28, fighting deportation because of a felony charge for having obtained false documents. "We will fight our cases together," Vizguerra said.

Donations to support their fight can be made to "MDSC" and sent to Jefferson Unitarian Church, 14350 W. 32nd Ave., Golden, CO 80401, attention Carol Wilsey.

— ALYSON KENNEDY

'Malcolm X, Cuban Revolution share same ideals'

Continued from front page

Unity; Gail Walker, executive director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace; and Dr. Evelyn Erickson, a graduate of the Latin American School of Medicine in Havana.

"We're here to honor the lives of two extraordinary figures in world history," Fernández said, "Malcolm and Fidel Castro."

The two revolutionaries met each other in September 1960 when Castro came to address the United Nations. U.S. authorities connived to deny Castro and the Cuban delegation hotel lodging in Manhattan.

Malcolm invited the Cubans to stay at the Hotel Theresa, where he joined thousands lining the streets waving Cuban flags, welcoming them to Harlem.

"When that historic meeting between Malcolm and Fidel took place," Castillo said, it showed they "shared the same dreams and aspirations for the independence of other oppressed people worldwide, particularly in Africa."

When Che Guevara went to Africa and joined fighters in the Congo taking up arms against Belgian and U.S. imperialism, Castillo said, "The spirit of Malcolm was also there together with those Cuban and African combatants.

"When tens of thousands of Cuban voluntary combatants heeded the call of their African brothers" and joined the 15 year-long battle against the troops of the South African apartheid regime who invaded Angola, Castillo said, "Malcolm was there because he was a forerunner and pioneer of internationalism."

"The ideas of Malcolm retain their full validity," he said. "Therefore, our best tribute to Malcolm X can be no other than to continue fighting.

"Our best tribute to Malcolm X can be no other than to continue defending our socialism in Cuba and fighting against the U.S. blockade," he said.

"Cuba has put itself on the line for Blacks in Africa, the Caribbean and Black people here," Sales told the audience. "When Reagan sent U.S. troops" against the revolution in Grenada, he said, "Cuban construction workers fought and died defending that revolution."

"Thousands of Cubans helped to defeat South Africa in Angola," he said, "facilitating the end of apartheid. We have to thank the Cuban Revolution under the leadership of Fidel Castro for supporting us."

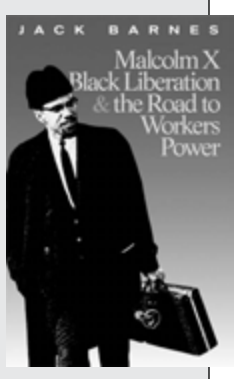
Walker described how IFCO has worked to support Cuba for decades, beginning with material-aid caravans organized by her father, the late Lucius Walker, the group's founder.

She described how he faced U.S. government harassment and served time in jail for solidarity with Cuba. Washington continues to go after IFCO today, including moving to strip the group of its tax-exempt status.

Erickson described how Castro had initiated the Latin American School of Medicine. ELAM, the school's Spanish acronym, has trained thousands of doctors from around the world for free. The only condition has been that graduates agree to start their practice in working-class neighborhoods when they return home.

Meeting participants applauded when Castillo concluded his remarks saying, "Our best tribute to Malcolm X can be no other than to keep in our hearts an everlasting gratitude to the people of Harlem."

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, & the Road to Workers Power



"This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States ... and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution."

— Jack Barnes

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Women's history 'helps us see ahead and move forward'

Below is an excerpt from the introduction to Woman's Evolution *by Evelyn Reed, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. The widely acclaimed book was the culmination of over a quarter century of work by Reed, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party until her death in 1979. She defends the historical materialism of 19th century anthropologist Lewis Morgan, whose work Frederick Engels drew on extensively in* The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State. *Providing a scientific explanation of the origins of women's oppression and the class-struggle road to end it, Reed dedicates the book "To women, on the way to liberation." Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

Militant photos: above, Betsy Farley; inset, Flax Hermes

Above, protest in Indianapolis of more than 3,000 in defense of women's right to choose abortion, April 2016. Knowing women's role in history can "heighten self-confidence of women who are today aspiring for liberation," wrote Evelyn Reed, inset.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY EVELYN REED

The early history of half the human species — womankind — has largely been hidden from view. To bring it to light requires a reinvestigation of anthropology, where the role and accomplishments of women in prehistoric society are buried. This book is a contribution to unveiling that remarkable record.

The resurgence of the women's liberation movement has thrown the spotlight on certain dubious assumptions and disputed questions regarding the past. Foremost among these is the subject of the matriarchy. Was there a period in history when women held a highly esteemed and influential place? If so, how did they lose their social eminence and become the subordinate sex in patriarchal society? Or is the matriarchy, as some say, a myth that has no historical basis?

The matriarchy is one of the most hotly contested issues in a hundred-year controversy between contending schools in anthropology. This book affirms that the maternal clan system was the original form of social organization and explains why. It also traces the course of its development and the causes of its downfall. Such partisanship on the side of the matriarchy would alone make this book controversial. But it contains other challenges to long-held opinions on prehistoric society.

Disagreements are to be expected in a field that covers so vast a stretch of human evolution, extending from the birth of our species to the threshold of civilization, and where the available data derived from biology, archaeology, and anthropology is fragmentary and uncoordinated.

Anthropology was founded as a distinct science in the middle of the nineteenth century. Most of the founding fathers (women entered the profession only later) had an evolutionary approach. Morgan, Tylor, and other pioneers regarded anthropology as the study of the origin of society and the material forces at work in its progress. They made brilliant beginnings in illuminating the main stages in human development.

Morgan delineated three great epochs of social evolution — from savagery through barbarism to civilization. Each was marked off by decisive advances in the level of economic activity. The most rudimentary stage, savagery, was based on hunting and food-gathering. Barbarism began with food production through agriculture and stock raising. Civilization crowned the development of the ancient world by bringing it to the point of commodity production and exchange.

These three epochs were of extremely unequal duration. Savagery lasted far longer than either of its successors. Although savagery is sometimes differentiated into an earlier "primeval" and a later "primitive" stage, both of these rested upon a hunting and gathering economy. Savagery had a span of a million-odd years, comprising more than 99 percent of human existence. Barbarism began about eight thousand years ago; civilization only three thousand years ago.

The early investigators of savage society, to their own surprise, came upon a social structure totally different from ours. They found a clan and tribal system based on maternal kinship and in which women played a leading role. This stood out in sharp contrast with modern society which features the father-family and male supremacy. Although they were unable to tell how far back the maternal system went, we propose to show that it dates from the beginning of humankind.

They made other astonishing discoveries. They observed that savage society had egalitarian social and sexual relations, arising from collective production and communal possession of property. These features too were at odds with modern society, based on private property and class divisions. Thus the maternal clan system, which gave an honored place to women, was also a collectivist order where the members of both sexes enjoyed equality and did not suffer oppression or discrimination.

Subsequently, these discoveries evoked doubts and resistance from the schools of anthropology that became dominant in the twentieth century. There arose a deep division between evolutionists and anti-evolutionists that has persisted to the present day. It is only through the evolutionary approach, however, that the concealed history of women — and of men — can be uncovered. …

The first two parts of this book deal with the matriarchal age —one from the standpoint of the mothers and the other from the standpoint of the brothers. The third part delineates the transition from matriarchy and matrifamily to patriarchy and father-family.

The terms "savage" and "primitive," often used in a derogatory, colonialist, or racist sense, are here used exclusively in a scientific way. "Savage" is simply a designation for our earliest ancestors. Without their colossal achievements over a span of a million years, humanity could not have walked the last mile to civilization.

To forestall other misunderstandings: This book does not suggest any return to a "lost paradise" of the matriarchy. The infancy of humanity with all its grandeur and limitations is behind us. All the same, that fundamental chapter of human evolution must be restored and take an honored place in our history. A correct understanding of the remote past can help us see ahead and move forward more surely.

This is especially true when we consider the outstanding role played by women in ancient times. The knowledge that female inferiority today is not biologically determined, that it has not been a permanent fixture throughout history, and that our sex was once the organizers and leaders of social life, should heighten the self-confidence of women who are today aspiring for liberation.

March BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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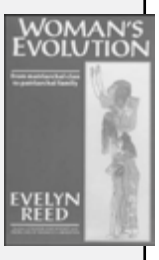

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Lenin, Fidel and the role of the individual in history

Socialist revolutions in Russia and Cuba based on the liberating capacities of working people

Below are the remarks by Mary-Alice Waters, one of three panelists at a Feb. 13 special program on the 100th Anniversary of the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution presented at the Havana International Book Fair. (See article below.) Waters is a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party and president of Pathfinder Press. *Copyright © 2017 by Pathfinder Press.* *Reprinted by permission.*

Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Panel at Havana International Book Fair on 100th anniversary of 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. From left, Dagoberto Rodríguez and Thalía Fung, professors at University of Havana; Isabel Monal, editor of magazine *Marx Ahora* (Marx Today); Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of Socialist Workers Party in U.S. Monal pointed to "the extraordinary influence of Lenin, of Marxism, on Fidel and the Cuban Revolution."

Above, Andrew St. George

"Apart from Lenin and Fidel, the history of the twentieth century — and the twenty-first — is unthinkable," said Jack Barnes in letter to Cuban President Raúl Castro on behalf of Socialist Workers Party. Both "gave their lives to uprooting the dog-eat-dog exploitation, oppression, and compulsion on which the capitalist world order depends and replacing it with a workers state." Left, Bolshevik leaders V.I. Lenin, center, and Leon Trotsky (saluting), 1920. Above, Fidel Castro (glasses), and Celia Sánchez, with other Rebel Army combatants during revolutionary war. Both Fidel's and Lenin's presence on front lines of struggle and their political leadership at crucial moments were decisive and irreplaceable, said Mary-Alice Waters.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Thank you Isabel. And a thank you to the compañeros of Ciencias Sociales publishing house for giving me the opportunity to participate in this important event marking the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution.

As Isabel has indicated, I'm not a historian by occupation. If I had a Facebook page — which I don't — I would list my occupation as "communist." That is what has guided my actions since I became a conscious political person more than fifty years ago and joined the communist movement in the United States, the Socialist Workers Party.

As all the great revolutionary leaders of the working class have taught us — from Marx and Engels, to Lenin and Fidel — no one becomes a Marxist without being a student of science and history. Not history as it is taught in the academies — an incomprehensible catalog of names, dates, events, and above all rationalizations for the "existing fact" of capitalist social relations.

What I'm talking about is *living history*, in which *we* — working people — are the protagonists. "The existing class struggle," "the historical movement going on under our very eyes," to use the words of the Communist Manifesto. And always from the point of view of a person who automatically asks *Was tun?*

"And what is to be done?"

It is in that spirit that Isabel and the compañeros of Ciencias Sociales invited me to participate today. Pathfinder Press, where part of my activity is centered, has published dozens of books on the Bolshevik Revolution and its ongoing continuity. Some of them are available on the table at the side of the room.

And, as the pamphlet you all received a copy of explains, *Pathfinder* itself *Was Born with the October Revolution.*

Two great socialist revolutions

Last November, in the hours following the death of Fidel, Jack Barnes, the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, sent a message on behalf of the party to compañero Raúl. I want to begin by quoting from that letter, which states with clarity the theme of my remarks today: "Lenin, Fidel and the Role of the Individual in History." You each received a copy of this message as well.

> Dear Compañero Raúl,
>
> There were two great socialist revolutions in the twentieth century, one in Russia, the other in Cuba. Neither was the product of a single individual. Both were the result of the operations of capitalism itself. But without the presence and political leadership of Vladimir Lenin and of Fidel Castro Ruz at decisive moments in those historic battles by working people, there is no reason to believe either revolution would have been victorious.
>
> Apart from Lenin and Fidel, the history of the twentieth century — and the twenty-first — is unthinkable. Both of them, Marxist students of science and history, gave their lives to uprooting the dog-eat-dog exploitation, oppression, and compulsion on which the capitalist world order depends and replacing it with a workers state, with new social and economic relations based on the liberating capacities of working people and the youth they inspire. . . .
>
> [Fidel's] highest achievement was forging in struggle a revolutionary cadre, a communist cadre, capable of leading the workers and farmers of Cuba to establish the first free territory of the Americas and successfully defend it for more than five and a half decades against the determination to destroy it by the mightiest and most brutal empire the world has known. . . .
>
> His life work, Cuba's socialist revolution — its example, and above all its ongoing march — stand as his monument. He needs no other.

A tribute to Lenin and Fidel

Our discussion here today is as much part of the Havana International Book Fair's tribute to Fidel — and his *political* leadership of the Cuban Revolution — as it is to Lenin and the 100th anniversary of October. No other events did more to change the course of history in our epoch and open the road forward for all humanity. And, as the message to Raúl says, it is likely that neither revolution would have succeeded without the presence and leadership of Lenin and Fidel at decisive turning points.

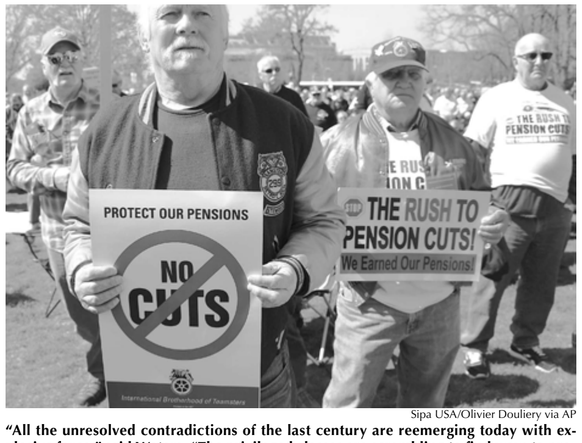
Debate among revolutionists over the reciprocal action of objective and subjective factors in the historical process is not new, of course. It goes back to the foundations of Marxism. Georgi Plekhanov's classic 1898 essay on *The Role of the Individual in History* — a polemic against the Narodnik current in Tsarist Russia, which exalted the lone hero as an autonomous creator of history — was one sided and mechanical. But it influenced the generation being won to Marxism in the years before the betrayal of the leadership of the Second International in face of the first interimperialist slaughter.

Would the October Revolution have succeeded without both the *presence* and the *political* leadership of Lenin at decisive moments in 1917? Could another revolutionary leader, or a combination of them, have assumed Lenin's place?

Leon Trotsky, whose standing in the leadership of the Bolshevik Revolution was second only to Lenin's, wrote about this question more than once in the years after Lenin's death. As those of you here today are well aware, Trotsky was the organizer of the insurrection and then of the Red Army that successfully defended the young Soviet republic from the combined forces of domestic and international reaction — from London and Paris, to Tokyo and Washington, to the so-called White armies of Russia's defeated landlords, capitalists, and monarchists.

And for those who come from a different political past than I do, I'll add that despite Trotsky's differences with Lenin's unwavering course that made possible the toilers' victory, after Trotsky unreservedly joined Lenin in rejecting conciliation with the Mensheviks and other class collaborationists in mid-1917, "from that time

Continued on page 10



Sipa USA/Olivier Douliery via AP

"All the unresolved contradictions of the last century are reemerging today with explosive force," said Waters. "The privileged classes are scrambling to find ways to protect their interests from the humble majority, those Hillary Clinton scornfully labeled during her election campaign 'the 'deplorables.'" Above, Teamsters union retirees rally in front of U.S. Capitol to protest drastic pension cuts, April 14, 2016.

100th anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution discussed at Havana event

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA — A program on the 100th anniversary of the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia's former czarist empire was one of the special events at the Havana International Book Fair this year. "Something that's sometimes forgotten today," said Isabel Monal, who chaired the panel, is "the extraordinary influence of Lenin, of Marxism, on Fidel and the Cuban Revolution."

Monal, former longtime director of the Philosophy Institute in Havana, is today the editor of the magazine *Marx Ahora* (Marx Today). She began her history of revolutionary activity in the 1950s as part of the underground struggle against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. In late 1958 she was arrested in the United States for transporting guns destined for the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army, which under Fidel Castro's leadership brought the revolutionary struggle to victory here in January 1959.

In October 1917, guided by the Bolshevik Party under Vladimir Lenin's leadership, working people in their millions overthrew the state power of the capitalists and landlords in Russia and across the fallen monarchy's prison house of nations, stretching from eastern Europe, through central Asia, to the Pacific. They established a workers and peasants republic and opened the door to the world's first socialist revolution.

The panel discussion on lessons of that profound revolutionary upheaval was organized by Ciencias Sociales publishing house. Ciencias Sociales released a new Spanish-language edition of John Reed's classic, *Ten Days That Shook the World*, which was on sale throughout the 10-day book fair. First published in English in 1919, the book is a vivid eyewitness account of the Bolshevik-led revolution. Reed was one of the founders of the Communist Party in the United States that same year.

The panelists were Dagoberto Rodríguez and Thalía Fung, professors at the University of Havana, and Mary-Alice Waters, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States and president of Pathfinder Press.

"With the coming to power of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the Russian events grew in influence in the United States," said Rodríguez in his talk on the revolution's impact in the U.S. For the first time ever, there was "a government representing the interests of the broad majority of the population."

Attracted by the Bolshevik example, the revolutionary left wing of the Socialist Party in the United States broke with the party's reformist leadership, Rodríguez said, and founded the Communist Party. It joined the Communist International, a worldwide organization of revolutionary workers parties launched in 1919 at the initiative of the Bolshevik leadership.

Rodríguez focused on the reaction of the U.S. capitalist rulers, whose fear of the revolution's spreading example led them to launch a "red scare," arresting thousands of militant workers and deporting more than 500.

Two great socialist revolutions

Mary-Alice Waters spoke on "Lenin, Fidel, and the Role of the Individual in History." She drew on a message that Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, sent Raúl Castro, first secretary of the Communist Party and Cuba's president, after the death in November of Fidel Castro, the central leader of the Cuban Revolution for six decades.

"There were two great socialist revolutions in the 20th century, one in Russia, the other in Cuba," Barnes said in the message. Without the presence and political leadership of Lenin and Fidel at decisive moments, "there is no reason to believe either revolution would have been victorious."

Fidel Castro's highest achievement, Barnes wrote, "was forging in struggle a revolutionary cadre, a communist cadre" that led the working class in Cuba, their toiling allies, and youth attracted to their leadership to take power and defend that power for more than half a century.

Waters said that Fidel, "like Lenin and Che [Guevara], believed in the capacity of ordinary human beings to accomplish what others believed to be impossible, and, *above all*, to transform themselves in the process."

She noted that "Lenin's presence on the front lines of the revolutionary struggle — sheltered by workers in the proletarian districts of Petrograd — was necessary to the success of the proletarian revolution. As was Fidel's leadership in the Sierras, protected by peasants and rural toilers among whom the Rebel Army began laying the foundations of the new social order."

And, just as it was Lenin who politically led the leaders of the Russian Revolution, Waters said, it was Fidel's "steady moral, political and military *leadership of the leadership*" that was decisive in the Cuban Revolution.

Waters stressed her agreement with Fidel Castro's remarks last year that it will not another century before "another event like the Russian Revolution occurs." (See Waters' talk, p. 8.)

Thalía Fung spoke on "Lenin and the October Revolution." As a young lawyer in Santiago de Cuba in the 1950s, Fung defended some 30 members of the July 26 Movement captured by the Batista dictatorship during the November 1956 uprising in that city and participated in other revolutionary activity the next two years in Bayamo, Manzanillo, and Guantánamo. A graduate of Lomonosov University in Moscow, she was for many years a leading figure in the School of Philosophy and History at the University of Havana.

Fung focused on "Lenin's role in the field of political philosophy and political science." Stating that "Rosa Luxemburg was more Marxist than Lenin," she pointed to differences between Luxemburg and Lenin over the character of the working class and peasantry as "historical subjects," differences that have been part of debates over revolution-

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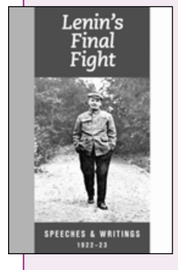
From the Bolshevik to the Cuban Revolution and beyond



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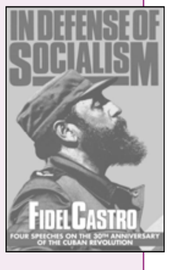

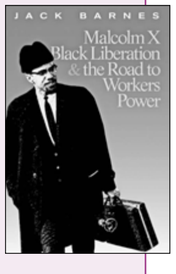

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Lenin, Fidel changed history

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on" — in Lenin's words — "there has been no better Bolshevik."

From April to October and beyond

In his *History of the Russian Revolution* — in the chapter "Who Led the February Insurrection?" — Trotsky answered that question as follows: it was led by "conscious and tempered workers educated for the most part by the party of Lenin." Lenin's leadership was thus crucial not only after the February Revolution but in the years leading up to it, years during which Lenin was in exile.

Lenin's leadership took on a decisive and *irreplaceable* character, however, from his post-February political reorientation of the Bolshevik leadership — boldly presented in the "April Theses" — through the October insurrection and beyond. No one else could have taken Lenin's place, and he could not have led the working class to victory from afar.

There are moments in politics when timing — and unflinching determination — is everything. Fidel's clarion call to action in 1956, announcing to the world that before year's end the men of the *Granma* expedition "will be free or we will be martyrs," is such an example.

Lenin's *presence* on the front lines of the revolutionary struggle — sheltered by workers in the proletarian districts of Petrograd — was necessary to the success of the proletarian revolution. As was Fidel's leadership in the Sierras, protected by peasants and rural toilers among whom the Rebel Army began laying the foundations of the new social order.

And Lenin's *political leadership* of the Bolshevik party at critical moments was equally irreplaceable. The Bolshevik party led the workers and peasants to victory. But it was Lenin who *led the leaders* of the revolution. It was Lenin who stabilized the party and won the fainthearts in the Bolshevik leadership through the waverings of March and April, to the perilous July days, and beyond. It was Lenin who insisted on *publicly* announcing the date of the insurrection, without which it would have likely failed.

The political authority Lenin had earned among the cadres through years of revolutionary struggle was equal to none.

Chance played a role too. We can ask ourselves, what might have been the course of history had the German high command, for its own reasons, not allowed Lenin to travel by train through German lines to Sweden, and then on to Petersburg in April 1917? Or if Lenin had been mortally wounded by his would-be assassin in August 1918? Or felled by a stroke such as those that ended his political life a few years later?

Writing from exile in 1935, Trotsky's conclusion was unambiguous: "For the sake of clarity I would put it this way. Had I not been present in 1917 in Petersburg, the October Revolution would still have taken place — *on the condition that Lenin was present and in command*. If neither Lenin nor I had been present in Petersburg, there would have been no October Revolution: the leadership of the Bolshevik party would have prevented it from occurring."

Retuers/Rafael Perez

Fidel Castro speaking to a crowd of half a million in Santiago de Cuba, June 8, 2002. Like Lenin and Che Guevara, Waters said, Fidel "believed in the capacity of ordinary human beings to accomplish what others believed to be impossible, and, above all, to transform themselves in the process."

From Moncada to 1959 and beyond

Returning to the Cuban Revolution, the parallels are inescapable. The historical conditions that gave rise to the Batista coup, the Centenary Generation, and the revolutionary struggle for power led by Fidel had been gestating for years. Objective conditions were more than ripe.

But without Fidel's leadership, would the bold call to action — the assault on the Moncada Garrison — have been organized? Would the *Granma* landing and the November 30 uprising in Santiago have occurred?

If by chance Fidel had been killed in any of these events, or struck down in combat during the revolutionary war, had he been felled by the traitor resting next to him in the Sierras — would the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army have defeated the offensive of Batista's 10,000 troops? Would they have won the *political* authority to displace the scheming bourgeois opposition leaders with their Miami Pacts and other conciliationist maneuvers?

Would the Cuban people have achieved the unprecedented feats of holding the imperialist empire to the north at bay for decades, defeating the army of the South African apartheid regime, and leading the epic battle of the Special Period to victory?

Without Fidel's steady moral, political and military *leadership of the leadership* — over more than 60 years — would Cuba's socialist revolution, *despite all historical odds*, still be on course today?

No one can prove a negative. But as historical materialists, we have to say that all evidence makes it unlikely.

A proletarian line of march

Fidel's leadership, like Lenin's, was proletarian leadership. Fidel spoke less frequently in class terms, but the class line of march was the same. As Raúl reminded us, Fidel led a revolution "of the humble, by the humble and for the humble."

Like Lenin and Che, he believed in the capacity of ordinary human beings to accomplish what others believed to be impossible, and, *above all*, to transform themselves in the process.

"Our revolution started from scratch, from nothing," Fidel said in 1987. "We did not have a single weapon; we did not have a penny, even the men who started the struggle were unknown, and yet . . . we confronted the thousands of soldiers, and the revolution triumphed because we believed in man."

The revolutionary war had one and only one objective: to take power as *quickly as possible*, with *the least possible cost in human lives*. "With a minimum of weapons and a maximum of moral values," to cite a Radio Rebelde broadcast from the Sierras in August 1958.

"Politics begin where millions of men and women are," Lenin told the Extraordinary Congress of the Russian Communist Party in March 1918, "where there are not thousands, but millions, that is where serious politics begin."

That is what guided the Bolsheviks

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100th anniversary of Bolshevik revolution

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ary strategy since the founding of the international workers movement.

Those seeking social change in the world, Fung said, need to orient to "our South," referring to radical political currents and governments today in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and elsewhere in Latin America.

A panelist invited to speak on the Russian Revolution's impact in Latin America was unable to attend at the last minute, so Isabel Monal took up that theme as she introduced other speakers.

October Revolution: a beacon

"A central part of Lenin's work was the effort to spread Marxism and communist ideas throughout the world," Monal said. "And the October Revolution was a beacon for all of Latin America, for the revolutionary popular movements that swept the continent in the 1920s."

During the discussion, Rubén Zardoya, a University of Havana professor who also works at the Center for Hemispheric and U.S. Studies, spoke about Lenin's political leadership in the first five years after the revolution's victory. Workers and peasants took power in October 1917 in a country with a relatively low level of economic development, Zardoya said. Lenin charted a course to broaden access to culture in order to strengthen working people in the fight to transform social and economic relations.

Zardoya urged participants to read Lenin's 1922-23 speeches and writings on these questions in the book *Lenin's Final Fight*, published by Pathfinder Press. Several years ago Zardoya, who was then rector of the University of Havana, invited communists from the U.S. and other countries to present that and other Pathfinder books to students there.

Martín Koppel, part of a group of communist workers from the Socialist Workers Party and other countries who volunteered to staff the Pathfinder stand at the book fair, spoke about the watershed the October Revolution represented for the working-class movement in the United States. During its early years the U.S. Communist Party led strikes, defense campaigns, and other workers struggles, he said.

Koppel pointed to *The First Ten Years of American Communism* by James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the Communist Party and later the Socialist Workers Party. Cannon explains the decisive lessons the young CP learned from the Bolshevik leaders of the Communist International, including the necessity for the party to shed its underground existence and to champion the struggles by African-Americans against racist discrimination and for national self-determination. After the panel discussion, several participants bought copies of that Pathfinder book as well as *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, which also takes up these questions.

Can't ignore class struggle

In her remarks on Latin America, Monal pointed to political developments in Brazil, Venezuela, and other countries in recent years with governments claiming to represent working people.

"One of the big mistakes is that in a number of countries, movements leading these processes threw the class struggle out the window," she said. "How can you understand the world if you don't see social classes and the class struggle? Sometimes you have to make alliances with reformist groups on joint projects, but you can't have too many illusions in them." The result is that little is done to meet the needs of the working population.

Monal said she had been in Brazil when big demonstrations were held demanding improvements in health care and other urgent needs. The government later claimed credit for reforms, but the people knew these measures had been carried out "because they went into the streets to demand them."

Today there's a counteroffensive by the right and by imperialism against these governments, Monal said. "And nobody should be surprised they're making gains. ... When the counteroffensive begins, the masses of people don't take to the streets against it, because the governments promised and could have done a number of things but didn't do them."

Monal recalled that as a young woman during the first years of the Cuban Revolution, she had read the account of the Bolshevik-led insurrection in *Ten Days That Shook the World*. "The book had a huge impact on me," she said. What is describes "remains relevant for today. And it has a special relevance given the conditions in Latin America today."

EDITORIAL

Back SWP fight vs. gov't interference

The Socialist Workers Party's decades-long fight to expose the anti-working-class role of Washington's spies and goons, along with its defense of workers' political rights in winning exemption from financial disclosure to the Federal Election Commission, deserves the support of all working people.

From 1973 to 1988 the SWP waged a legal and political campaign to get out the truth about the government's war against communists, Black and Puerto Rican rights fighters, unionists and others. The party forced out thousands of pages of FBI files documenting spying and disruption by government agents and secret informers. It exposed government wiretaps, burglaries and "trash covers" and showed how the FBI had gotten party members fired, framed up and victimized.

These exposés helped new generations of worker and political militants know the truth about what they face from the propertied rulers, who seek to maintain their rule against working people.

The SWP's continuing fight for exemption from the rulers' "financial disclosure" laws is built on these gains. The party also marshals evidence of continuing attacks on the party by the cops, the government, right-wing goons and the bosses today. And it draws out facts about how the government is organizing its spies and disrupters to target all those fighting today — workers battling boss attacks, opponents of imperialist war, fighters against the colonial status of Puerto Rico and many more.

The rulers need political police to maintain their dog-eat-dog capitalist system. And they need them more today, as the depression conditions bred by the deepening crisis of that system grind down relentlessly on working people, and discussion spreads about how to fight back effectively. Interest in and support for the SWP is growing.

Today the rulers are getting unexpected help from liberals and neo-conservatives alike, who praise the courage and veracity of the FBI and CIA for leaks that go after Donald Trump. As William Kristol of the *Weekly Standard* put it, I "prefer the deep state to the Trump state."

Throwing aside the real history and role of government finks and thugs help the rulers' efforts to rehabilitate their spy outfits and are a deadly danger to working people and our political rights.

Support the SWP and its fight against government interference.

SWP exemption fight defends political rights

Continued from page 5

working people in the U.S. and across the earth to emulate and defend; and the call on working people to break definitively with both the Democratic and Republican parties."

The arguments advanced in the FEC's draft opinion would shift the standards in such a way to make it virtually impossible for any workers party to win exemption from the rulers' disclosure laws. At the same time it dismisses evidence presented by the party of continuing attacks and threats against party members and supporters by rightists, bosses, cops and government agencies, while giving lip service to "the historical pattern of previous actions against the SWP."

This pattern includes the decadeslong campaign against the SWP by the FBI and other spy agencies — part of "Cointelpro" operations also directed against fighters for Black rights and others — which was exposed in a landmark 15-year legal battle against the government won by the SWP in 1986.

That record "should alone be sufficient to establish that there is a 'reasonable probability that the compelled disclosure of a party's contributors' names will subject them to threats, harassment, or reprisals from either Government officials or private parties,'" the SWP's attorneys wrote, citing previous court rulings. They also point to "the well-known, documented, post-9/11 efforts of the U.S. government to monitor domestic protest organizations as well as political advocacy and religious groups, such as labor unions, the Black Lives Matter movement and the Muslim community — all communities that the SWP actively engages and defends." The FEC draft contends this is irrelevant.

"In today's growing capitalist crisis, the U.S. rulers increasingly fear working people and are stepping up their spying and disruption operations targeting political and union activity," Studer said.

"And they're getting help from liberals and neoconservatives alike, who praise the courage and veracity of the FBI and CIA for leaks that go after Donald Trump," Studer said. "They are trying to rehabilitate the government's spies, pushing aside their record of attacks and disruption against the unions, the SWP and political rights.

"Whatever the outcome of this battle, we'll keep campaigning, offering the one working-class voice in the elections," he said.

Lenin, Fidel and the role of the individual

Continued from page 10

during the tumultuous years of the Russian Revolution and its early struggle for survival.

It is what guided and continues to guide the Cuban leadership to this day.

Imperialism lost Cold War

Some twenty-five years ago, shortly after the collapse of the "meringue," to use Fidel's term, the Socialist Workers Party adopted a resolution entitled "US Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War." (It is published in the magazine of Marxist politics and theory, *New International*, and is available on the table over there.) At the time, there was hardly a soul on the planet who didn't think we were delusional. Including here in Cuba, where you were living through the darkest days of the Special Period.

Today, perhaps, we aren't so alone in holding to that view.

The "Cold War" was never about bringing down a bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies. For the imperialist rulers, it was always about trying in vain to hold off the inevitable acceleration and sharpening of the class struggle on both sides of what they called "the Iron Curtain." It was about trying to convince working people on both sides that they were enemies of each other — not allies — in order to divide, weaken, and conquer.

The meringue fell first, but today it is the European Union, NATO, and other institutions of imperialist rule that are cracking. All the unresolved contradictions of the last century are reemerging with explosive force. And the privileged classes everywhere are scrambling to try to find ways to protect their interests from the humble majority, those who Hillary Clinton during her presidential election campaign scornfully labeled "the deplorables."

The exploiters scramble to find ways to deny their fear.

On the 100th anniversary of the great October Revolution, there are those who say the occasion should be commemorated with angry denunciations and shouts of "Never Again!"

For our part, we can affirm with confidence, as Fidel did in his words to the closing session of the Cuban Communist Party congress last April, that it will not be another century before "another event like the Russian Revolution occurs, in order that humanity have another example of a magnificent social revolution that marked a huge step in the struggle against colonialism and its inseparable companion, imperialism."

Greek workers' crisis

Continued from page 4

bondholders of $2.2 billion due in July require the Syriza government to inflict ever more damage on working people.

The IMF says it won't participate in a further bailout unless some of Greece's debt to the bondholders is written off. They've concluded that the full amount is unpayable, and that continuing to push for it threatens getting the most possible. But the rulers in Berlin are opposed, refusing to forego any of the capital owed to them.

In a mid-January *Times of London* interview, President Donald Trump accurately said that the EU is basically a vehicle to promote the interests of German capitalists. The Trump administration adds a new wild card to the EU's problems, on top of Brexit in the U.K. and the Greek crisis.

"Why is Greece again on the brink? It seems like déjà vu. Will it ever end?" Ted Malloch, Trump's pick for U.S. ambassador to the EU, recently told a Greek TV late night chat show. "I would have to say that the odds are higher that Greece itself will break out of the euro. Whether the eurozone survives I think is a question that is very much on the agenda."

German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble has demanded the Tsipras government implement its current commitments to take more out of the hides of workers and farmers or suffer the consequences.

The IMF and EU bureaucrats, as well as the German government, all agree it is the workers and farmers of Greece that must pay. But for their own reasons, Athens and Brussels, looking over their shoulders at the growing anger of working people, are opposed to the depth of cuts imposed by the IMF.

"We cannot accept IMF insistence on further cuts in pensions," Greek Labor Minister Effie Achtsioglou said in a letter to the *Financial Times*. "Insisting on further pension cuts while Greek pensioners barely have enough to live on is not the way to address public discontent."

As the biggest contributor — making 17.5 percent of all the contributions to the IMF — Washington will have veto power over any action taken by the group over Athens.

The Greek rulers' unpayable debts are just one result of the ongoing world contraction of capitalist trade and production, exacerbated by the unequal relations between Athens and Berlin that flow from Greece's lower level of productivity and industrial development. Similar economic disparities also affect Italy, Ireland, Spain and Portugal.

In the European Union, the capitalists everywhere extol the principle of "ever greater union" while they fight to drive down the wages and living conditions of working people within their borders to be more competitive. The ruling classes of the larger powers — like Germany — seek to reinforce their domination, using their greater strength to extract profits at others' expense, deepening the exploitation of toilers and in their weaker rivals.

This is what is now playing out in Greece, where one-quarter of the working class is unemployed. And 46 percent of young people aged 15 to 24.

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